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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [FR](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMGT](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: TFUS01: UPDATE ON FRENCH ASSISTANCE FOR HURRICANE KATRINA

REF: A. A) SECSTATE 163366

- [B](#). B) SECSTATE 163729
- [C](#). C) TELCONS PARIS/TF1
- [D](#). D) SECSTATE 163416
- [E](#). E) PARIS 5995

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, NOT FOR INTERNET

[1](#). (U) SUMMARY: The GOF acknowledged notification of flight clearance for its aircraft to Little Rock on September 6, and remains ready to provide further assistance as the evolving situation in the US warrants. END SUMMARY.

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FRENCH ASSISTANCE  
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[2](#). (SBU) The GOF is pleased by news that FEMA and USAID's Joint Task Force for logistical details have finally arranged clearance for two aircraft to travel to Little Rock, Arkansas, on September 6. The planes will carry about 7 tons of material from staging locations in the Caribbean.

[3](#). (SBU) This initial transport is not the core of the assistance planned, but is only a first gesture of assistance. France is willing and able to provide more assistance following an assessment of priorities and needs.

[4](#). (SBU) The GOF reports it will send 7.1 tons of humanitarian aid via two planes, which includes 4.5 tons of tents and tarps and 1.6 tons of food rations. France proposes to send 4 disaster relief specialists to accompany the flight to conduct a needs assessment. Per telcons with TF1, we have discouraged the GOF from sending the personnel, and indicated that there will not be any appropriate authorities available to meet with them.

[5](#). (U) The GOF has offered to load up a plane from Paris which could include other material goods, such as tents and tarps, water treatment stations, and more food rations (20,000 to 30,000), as well as other items on the USG priority list. We have referred the MFA again to the USG list of priority needs (Ref A), and requested specifics on what items can be provided, when and from where.

[6](#). (U) The GOF has informed us of their participation in a joint operation with the British and with Airbus to make available the Airbus Beluga cargo carrier. It will send 12.7 tons of emergency supplies (tents, jerrycans, hygiene kits, cooking kits), and will leave on Wednesday September 7 for Mobile, Alabama. Embassy Paris understands this operation is being coordinated between London and Washington.

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PRIVATE ASSISTANCE  
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[7](#). (U) The MFA informed us that the NGO Telecom sans frontiers has already sent a team to Houston via commercial air to help restore telephone and communication links. This NGO's offer of assistance was included on the original French list, reported in para 2 of Ref E.

[8](#). (U) Air France Chief of Staff Guy Tardieu told Econ M/C September 6 that Air France is informing the MFA that the airline is prepared to make its excess cargo capacity available for French humanitarian relief shipments to the U.S. Air France has frequent service to Atlanta and Houston, for example. Air France is also prepared to provide cargo-only flights if needed. This could be used, for example, to move NGO donations of high-priority items into the Southeast.

STAPLETON